

The response has been prepared through  
DDI Office and will not come before  
USIB per se. Any questions re the above  
should be referred to  O/DDI.

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PFIAB review completed.

USIB-D-6.1/1  
29 February 1968

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UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR USIB PRINCIPALS

SUBJECT : PFIAB Request for an Appraisal of the Lessons Learned  
Regarding Intelligence Warning of the Attacks on Vietnamese  
Cities begun on 30 January

1. In executive session at the 29 February USIB meeting, the Director of Central Intelligence informed the Board Principals that he had received the attached letter on the subject from General Maxwell D. Taylor, the new Chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

2. Mr. Helms noted that a response to this request would require the participation of many of the USIB member agencies. He therefore asked that the Board Principals provide whatever assistance they could in making this appraisal. Mr. Helms said that Mr. R. J. Smith would be in contact with each of the Principals to make arrangements for the preparation of a response.

3. The subject request from the PFIAB is accordingly circulated herewith in one copy for each USIB Principal,

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[Redacted Signature Box]  
[Redacted Title Box] Executive Secretary

Attachment

cc: Mr. R. J. Smith

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GROUP 1  
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downgrading and  
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**THE WHITE HOUSE**

WASHINGTON

**PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD**

February 23, 1968

Honorable Richard M. Helms  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dick:

Following your appearance before the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on February 16, the members discussed at length your presentation of the facts now known with regard to the lack of warning from intelligence sources of the attacks on the Vietnamese cities which began on January 30. Because of the importance of this matter to the President, they concluded that they should go more deeply into the matter in the hope of identifying lessons which may be applicable to future intelligence problems.

I am writing to enlist your cooperation in attempting to ascertain to what extent, if any, our intelligence services and those of our allies were at fault in failing to alert our military and political leaders of the impending large-scale attack on the cities and towns of South Vietnam. I recognize the difficulty of making such a determination at this distance and the danger of impeding current operation-related activities by anything resembling a detailed investigation. Nevertheless, it would seem to be in the interest of the entire intelligence community, both here and in Saigon, to make an appraisal of the lessons of this experience while it is fresh in our minds.

As the Intelligence Board sees the problem, there are two basic questions which need to be answered:

- a. Did our intelligence collection agencies obtain all or most of the pertinent intelligence which was available in the circumstances?
- b. Was the evaluation of the available intelligence sound and did that evaluation reach the decision-makers in time to assist them in taking appropriate action?

The answer to these questions would require us to know in general what information bearing upon the attack of the cities

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reached senior officials such as General Westmoreland, the JCS, the Secretary of Defense, the DCI and the President and what picture of the evolving situation these reports created in the minds of the recipients. Enclosed herewith is a list of related questions which, if answered, would shed considerable light upon the effectiveness of the working of the intelligence process at this critical time.

The Board would be most grateful if, in concert with your colleagues of the Intelligence Community, you would give us the benefit of your views on these questions. As the matter will be a primary topic on the Board's agenda on April 11-12, it would be most helpful if I could receive your response by April 1. In the interim, I would be most interested in receiving any briefings from intelligence agencies which may bear upon this matter in order to be better prepared to deal with your report when it becomes available.

In appreciation of your cooperation in this matter,

Sincerely,



Maxwell D. Taylor

Enclosure

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ENCLOSURE TO LETTER TO DCI

a. What information reached J-2, MACV, in the period January 15-30 indicating the possibility of the attack on the cities? What can be said as to the origin, the quantity, the accuracy and the timeliness of this information?

b. In how many cases of attacks on the cities and towns did the responsible field commanders receive warning through intelligence sources in sufficient time to avoid being surprised? Please show on a map where these attacks occurred which were thus frustrated.

c. To what extent did the Vietnamese civil population give information to the authorities before and during the attacks? (It has been said on television that there was not a single report from civilian sources alerting GVN/US forces to the impending attacks.)

d. To what extent was there a free and rapid exchange of information between GVN and U.S. agencies?

e. Have the enemy units which engaged in the attacks now been identified? If so, what conclusions have been drawn from these identifications?

f. What substantive evaluated information bearing on the attack on the cities reached the following officials in the period January 15-30? (1) General Westmoreland, (2) JCS, (3) Secretary of Defense, (4) DCI, (5) The President.

g. Insofar as it can be reconstructed, what picture did these officials have of the situation based upon intelligence received just prior to the attack on the cities?

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